

Life After AmeriCorps



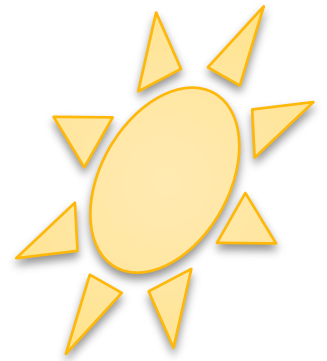
*Leverage your service experience
to build your future*

Objectives

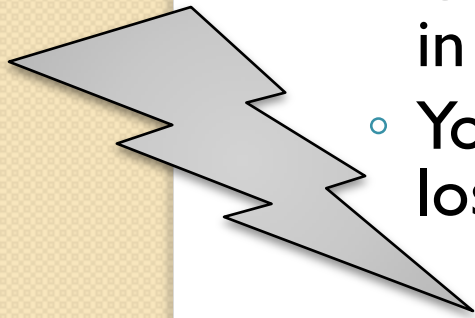
- Provide resources so that you can decide the next step and continue your research
- Walk through systems you will need to access after you exit AmeriCorps
- Equip you with powerful information to make the most of your post-AmeriCorps life
- Prepare you for transition stages and reentry

Your Term is Almost Done...

How do You Feel...



- Proud, accomplished, satisfied
 - Apathetic, disconnected, fatigued
 - Nervous, excited, eager
 - Angry, frustrated, cynical
 - Confused, fearful, isolated
-
- Chances are you feel more aware of social issues in your community.
 - You may now or sometime soon feel a sense of loss regarding your service.



Reflect

- Can you identify what, specifically has made you feel this way?
- What motivated you to join AmeriCorps?
- What have been your two standout accomplishments as an AmeriCorps member?



What's Next?

- Reenroll in AmeriCorps
- Continue education
- Find employment
- Do nothing / none of these

Where to go?

- Stay in service community
- Go home
- Go elsewhere



Your choice

Prepare to Leave

- Catalog your creations / build your portfolio
 - Position description, data on your accomplishments, programs you created
 - Ask permission to make copies or jump drive material that you've created
- Leave a map for the next member
 - Guides for systems you created for continuation; where stuff is (in your office/on file)
- Make some time to say goodbye
 - Co-workers, fellow members, volunteers, community members, friends

Leaving Right

- Before you pack up your “desk”
 - Final administrative issues: exit interview, forms, timesheets, VGP’s, etc...
 - Clarify that you’ve signed everything and have all your documentation in order
 - All documentation must be received to exit satisfactorily
 - Forwarding address, exchange of contact information
 - Ask for a reference or two!

Dealing with Leaving

- Prepare to describe your experience
 - Prepare for a variety of responses
- Journal, converse, express
- Recreate, catch up, enjoy yourself
- Continue to volunteer
- When you're ready:
 - Research, apply, interview
- *Remember that change is inevitable.*
 - The best way to begin moving on is to want to move on

<http://encorps.nationalserviceresources.org/whatsnext/index.shtml>

Reenrolling in AmeriCorps

- Available if you have served less than four terms of service (any length)
 - Same program
 - If you've had a mutually positive experience
 - Make your request in writing to Program Director
 - Different program
 - AmeriCorps State/National
 - AmeriCorps VISTA
 - AmeriCorps NCCC (18-24 year old only)
 - Senior Corps (55+ years)

Reenroll in the college dough...

- New education award amounts for 2010-11 (subject to change)
 - Full time \$5,350
 - Half time \$2,675
 - Reduced half \$2,038
 - Quarter time \$1,415
 - Minimum time \$1,132

Reenrolling...of sorts

- Peace Corps

- <http://www.peacecorps.gov/>

- Teach for America

- <http://www.teachforamerica.org/>

- Extended volunteer experiences

- <http://hodr.org/>

Education

- Finish High School
- Take classes of interest here and there
- Enroll in associate's degree
- Enroll in vocational school
- Apply for bachelor's degree program
- Apply for graduate/professional degree program
- Transfer education award *
 - Only possible for members 55+ who enrolled after Oct. 1, 2009

Education

Iowa Community Colleges

- <http://www.iacct.com/Pages/colleges.aspx>



Segal Education Award

- To access your award you must:
 - Successfully complete AmeriCorps term
 - Program Director must exit you for system
 - Create or access “My AmeriCorps Portal”



The screenshot shows the AmeriCorps website homepage. At the top left is the AmeriCorps logo, a circular emblem with a large 'A' and a star. To its right is the slogan "Your World. Your Chance To Make It Better." in a bold, stylized font. In the top right corner, there are links for "Contact Us", "Site Map", "Site Index", and an "XML" link. Below these is a search bar with the placeholder text "Enter a Search Term" and a "Search" button. Further down, there are links for "Forms", "Advanced Search", and "FONT SIZE: Default | Large". A red banner across the middle of the page contains the text "My AmeriCorps: Login | Help" in white, which is highlighted with a yellow box. Below this banner is a navigation bar with links for "AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL", "AMERICORPS NCCC", and "AMERICORPS VISTA". The main content area features a large photograph of several AmeriCorps members working on a wooden structure outdoors. To the right of the photo is a red box with the heading "Join AmeriCorps!" and a paragraph describing the program. Below the text is a form with a dropdown menu for "Community Development", a "Search" button, and a link for "Advanced Opportunity Search". At the bottom of the page is a red navigation bar with links for "ABOUT AMERICORPS", "FOR ORGANIZATIONS", "FOR INDIVIDUALS", and "OUR PROGRAMS".

AMERICORPS Your World. Your Chance To Make It Better.

Contact Us | Site Map | Site Index [XML](#)

Enter a Search Term

[Forms](#) | [Advanced Search](#)
FONT SIZE: [Default](#) | [Large](#)

My AmeriCorps: [Login](#) | [Help](#)

AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL ★ AMERICORPS NCCC ★ AMERICORPS VISTA

Join AmeriCorps!
AmeriCorps is your chance to put your ideals into action while learning new skills, making new connections, and earning money to pay for college. [> Learn more](#)

Tell us your interest:
and select your state:
[Advanced Opportunity Search](#)

[> Which Program Is Right for Me?](#)
[> Benefits of Service](#)
[> Frequently Asked Questions](#)

ABOUT AMERICORPS | FOR ORGANIZATIONS | FOR INDIVIDUALS | OUR PROGRAMS



HOME

My AmeriCorps

- ⊞ Applicant Home
- ⊞ My Tax Statements
- ⊞ My Education Award
 - + Create Forbearance Request
 - + Create Interest Accrual Request
 - + Create Education Award Payment Request
- ⊞ My Service Letter
- ⊞ Contact My AmeriCorps

Welcome, [REDACTED]

Welcome to the My AmeriCorps website for members and alumni. This site presents information that will help you before, during and after your service. Please be sure that all of your contact information is up-to-date.



Your World.
Your Chance To Make It Better.

My Information

Name: [REDACTED]
HSPID: [REDACTED]
SSN: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: [REDACTED]
Username: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]
Transfer Eligible: N

Mailing Address:
[REDACTED]
Cedar Rapids, IA [REDACTED]
Home Phone Number:
Work or Other Phone Number:

Permanent Address:
[REDACTED]
Cedar Rapids, IA [REDACTED]
Home Phone Number: [REDACTED]
Work or Other Phone Number: [REDACTED]

[Change Password](#)
[Edit My Contact Information](#)

Service Terms

<u>Program</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>City/State</u>	<u>Service Start</u>	<u>Service End</u>
STATE - AmeriCorps State	Linn County Conservation	Toddville, IA	09/01/2008	08/28/2009
STATE - AmeriCorps State	Linn County Conservation	Toddville, IA	09/27/2007	08/31/2008

+ Create Education Award
Payment Request

⊕ My Service Letter

⊕ Contact My AmeriCorps

Name: [REDACTED]
Date of Birth: [REDACTED]
HSPID: [REDACTED]
SSN: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Permanent Address: [REDACTED]
Cedar Rapids IA [REDACTED]
Home Phone Number: [REDACTED]
Work or Other Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Mailing Address: [REDACTED]
Cedar Rapids IA [REDACTED]
Home Phone Number:
Work or Other Phone Number:

AmeriCorps Service Date: 09/27/2007
Available Balance: \$9,450.00

* Payment Type:



* Amount Authorized:

Education Expenses
Loan Payment

Institution Information (Search for Institutions) ?

Please select an institution to send this request to by clicking the "Search Institutions" link above.

Certify and Submit ?

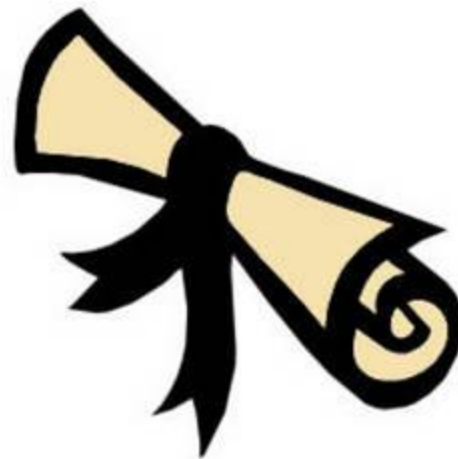
- ☐ I authorize the amount indicated above to be paid to the loan holder or educational institution named above.
- ☐ I certify that I have not been convicted, since the completion of my AmeriCorps service, of the possession or sale of a controlled substance.
- ☐ I further certify that I have received a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- ☐ I authorize the release of any loan information to the National Service Trust.

I certify that all of the information I have provided is true and correct. I understand that a knowing and willful false statement on this form can be punished by a fine or imprisonment or both pursuant to Section 1001 of Title 18, USC.

If you are unable to make these certifications, please contact the help desk at 1-888-507-5962 and we will inform you of what you must do to be eligible to use the award.

Segal Education Award

- Going back to school:
 - Can use ed. award at any Title IV school as defined by U.S. Dept. of Ed.
 - Includes many technical/vocational programs
 - <http://www.finaid.org/fafsa/tiv.phtml> (run search by state)



Segal Education Award

- Paying back your loans:
 - Must be qualified!
 - Lender should be able to tell you if your loan is covered by these statutes
 - Usual suspects include:
Perkins, Stafford, William D. Ford & federal consolidation loans
 - Be careful before you consolidate your loans to a private company.
 - Pay out the value of your ed. award first!

A qualified student loan means any loan made, insured, or guaranteed pursuant to Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 USC 1070 et seq.), other than a loan made to a parent of a student pursuant to section 428B of the Act; and any loan made pursuant to Title VII or VIII of the Public Service Health Act (42 USC 292a et seq.). Recent legislation includes loans made directly to members by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. These citations should be on your loan papers.

Mythbusters!

- As soon as you finish your term of service, you can receive your education award.
- **False.** To become eligible to receive your education award, you must complete all of your program's requirements in addition to your service hours or term. Your Program Director has to exit you from the system with the designation of “successfully completed”.

Mythbusters!

- Members can choose to take a cash payment rather than the education award.
- **True and false.** VISTA members can decide between a \$5,350 education award and a \$1,500 cash stipend as their post-service benefit (for VISTAs who commenced service after October 1, 2009). **AmeriCorps state and national members can select only the education award option.**

Mythbusters!

- If you use your credit card to pay for school, you can use your education award to pay your credit card bill.
- **False.** You can use your education award to make payments to qualified schools (listed as Title IV by the Department of Education) or loan agencies holding your qualified federal loans.

More on that...

- The Trust makes education award payments only to loan holders or Title IV schools, not to you.
 - But what if I don't have to pay tuition?
 - The ed. award covers “cost of attendance”
 - Room/board, books, supplies, fees
 - In some cases, schools will have purchasing agreements for computers and will have the student buy through those companies, or in some cases, the school can have the student bring receipts or use purchase orders to get what they need. Work with your financial aid office so you don't pay these out of pocket, or can be reimbursed, if you'd like to use you ed. award for this.

Mythbusters!

- You can use your education award to attend schools overseas.
- **True.** You are eligible to use your education award at any school listed by the U.S. Department of Education as Title IV.A number of overseas schools are on the Title IV list. If an overseas school tells you they will not accept the education award, you might be able to apply for a Stafford loan or other federal student loan, and then repay the loan with your education award.
 - Always ask! If they accept Stafford loans, they probably accept the ed. award.

Mythbusters!

- You have seven years to use your education award.
- **True.** You have seven years from the date of completion of service to use your award. Under certain circumstances, you can receive an extension. To receive an extension, you must apply in writing. To learn more about this, call the National Service Trust at 1-888-507-5962.
 - Apply for an extension BEFORE the exp. Date
 - Circumstances may include: more AmeriCorps terms, Peace Corps, military, illness, etc. (Any reasonable commitment that kept you from attending school for a year or more)

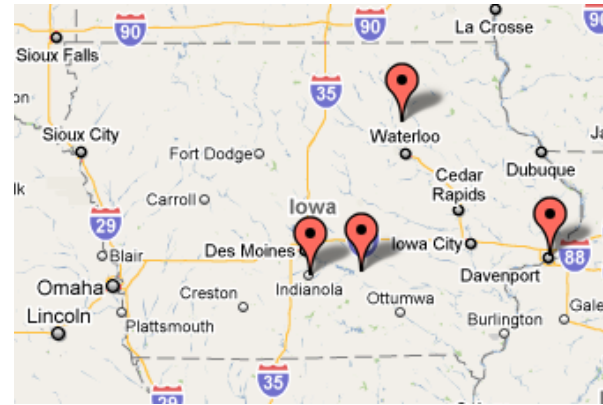
Mythbusters!

- You have to use up the entire education award at once.
- **False.** You can draw from your education award account at the National Service Trust in increments. For example, you can spread your education award over several semesters, or use one portion for tuition and another portion to pay down student loans.

Mythbusters!

- The education award is considered taxable income.
- **True.** The education award counts as taxable income for the tax years in which you use more than \$600.
 - The Trust will send you a 1099 for reporting**BUT!**
- State of Iowa has a law that waives the state tax for AmeriCorps education awards
 - You must use your education award at an Iowa school in order to take advantage of this incentive

Match!



- Many schools match the ed. award
 - % of award value, class credit, application fee, scholarships, etc.
 - An (un)comprehensive list:
http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/benefits/benefits_ed_award.asp
- Current Iowa schools that participate:
Central, St. Ambrose, Simpson, Wartburg AND Mt. Mercy, Cornell...ASK!
 - As an alum, you can work with your alma mater/future schools to bring them into the program!

Disclaimer!

- The best use of the education award is extremely variant depending on:
 - Your particular situation
 - Your lender
 - The financial aid office at your school
 - And everyone's knowledge of AmeriCorps' Education Awards that you have to deal with
- There is **NO** magic bullet
- Don't give up if you encounter barriers. You have *earned* this award.

Education Award & Financial Aid

- Get the most buying power!
- **ALWAYS**: Fill out the FAFSA's "additional financial information" section and report your AmeriCorps Education Award amount. You can potentially get better aid than you might have otherwise. Your ed. awards will not count against your financial aid need!
- TIP! Save your award and accept the school's financial aid offer. If you dump your education award up front, you may lose out on large grants and scholarships that would have been available for your level of need. If you dump your award first, your total school expenses may INCREASE. Use your education award to pay on the loans when you finish.
 - Learn as much as you can about financial aid.
 - www.finaid.org
 - Make an appointment to meet with a financial aid counselor to discuss your scenario. Take it as seriously as you would a job interview.
 - Use this phrase (or a variation) to make sure the financial aid counselor understands your circumstances: "I have an AmeriCorps Education Award, but I don't want to use it if it might cause me to lose aid."

Loan: Forbearance

- If you obtained forbearance on loans while in service and successfully completed your term...
- The Trust will pay accrued interest
 - all interest (for full time)
 - a portion (for part time)
 - Subject to taxes...



Does not deduct from your ed. award!

Loan: Forbearance

- You should:
 - First be exited from the system
 - When you see your term end & award appear in “My AmeriCorps” (next step done in system)
 - Request a statement from your lender that shows the total accrued interest during your postponement period (with beginning and end dates)
 - Have the statement sent to the Trust
 - Get a copy sent to you for records

Loan: Advance vs. Principal

- Advance (automatic)
 - The ed. award pays out as many monthly bills as it can (pays interest before principal)
 - You don't pay any loan bills while that holds out...but they return in full eventually!
 - May be for you if a) you hate paying your loan bills, b) you know you may not be able to pay for a while
- Principal (must request to your lender in writing)
 - The ed. award goes directly to the full amount borrowed before interest
 - You continue to pay your bill at a lower rate
 - May be for you if a) you want your loan paid off sooner, b) you can pay your monthly bills now, c) you want to pay back less money over the lifetime of the loan

Loan: Income Based Repayment

- ***What is IBR?*** IBR is a new student loan repayment plan
- IBR uses a kind of sliding scale to determine how much you can afford to pay on your federal loans. If you earn below 150% of the poverty level for your family size, your required loan payment will be \$0. If you earn more, your loan payment will be capped at 15 percent of whatever you earn above that amount. Except for the highest earners, that usually works out to less than 10 percent of your total income.
- <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/09fedreg.shtml>

Loan: Income Based Repayment

- ***What about interest?*** In some situations, your reduced payment under IBR may not cover the interest on your loans. If so, the government will pay that interest on your Subsidized Stafford Loans for your first three years in IBR. After three years and for other loan types, the interest will be added to the total amount you owe. While your debt may grow if your affordable payments are low enough, anything you still owe after 25 years of qualifying payments will be forgiven.
- <http://ibrinfo.org/>

Loan: Public Service Loan Forgiveness

- Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) is a new program for federal student loan borrowers who work in certain kinds of jobs. It will forgive remaining debt after 10 years of eligible employment and qualifying loan payments.
- <http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/attachments/siteresources/LoanForgivenessv4.pdf>
- **Who can get PSLF?** This program is for people with federal student loans who work in a wide range of "public service" jobs, including jobs in government and nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations

Loan: Public Service Loan Forgiveness

- **What types of public service jobs will qualify a borrower for loan forgiveness under this program?** The borrower must be employed full time (in any position) by a public service organization, or must be serving in a full-time AmeriCorps or Peace Corps position.
- Regular payments on your student loans made while you are an AmeriCorps member can count toward PSLF
- You can also use your Education Award toward PSLF
- More information and FAQs:
http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/08_1210_ccraa_faqs.pdf

Leveraging your service

- Objective: strategize how to best construct and represent your service experience on a resume, letter of intent or verbal interview.
- This is an intro to a method, and creating a polished product for yourself will take some time...

Leveraging your service

- Start with your position description, or a website or program description if you don't have one

POSITION:

Linn County Conservation will be recruiting 1 full time members assisting with environmental education at Wicketup Hill Outdoor Learning Center and other Linn County Conservation areas.

EMPLOYMENT PERIOD:

September 1, 2009 (or soon after this date) through August 31, 2010, a minimum of 1700 hours to complete the full-term of AmeriCorps service.

LIVING ALLOWANCE:

Full time AmeriCorps members receive a modest living allowance of \$1,000 a month for a 12-month contract term. Health insurance and student loan deferment is also provided. At the end of service, the member also receives a \$4725 education award that can be applied towards financial aid for previous or future education.

DESCRIPTION:

AmeriCorps engages more than 250,000 Americans in community-based service each year. Full-time AmeriCorps members receive a modest living allowance, student loan deferment, training and benefits. After the term of service, completing 1700 hours in a 12 month time period, members receive a substantial education award to help finance college or to pay back student loans. This member will prepare, conduct classroom visits and field trips to Linn County parks; creating educational displays; writing informational articles and press releases; conducting public presentations; and assisting with volunteer coordination and associated activities.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Must have some knowledge of Iowa's natural resources and the ability to express ideas clearly and concisely orally and in writing. Post high school training in Biology, Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, Environmental Studies, Anthropology or a related field preferred. Must be 18 years of age and possess a valid State of Iowa driver's license and pass a background check.

AmeriCorps Member – Conservation Education

Definition:

This is a 12 month position under the general supervision of the Conservation Board Environmental Education Coordinator. The Member will complete a minimum of 1700 hours of service during the 12 month contract (30-40 hours per week). AmeriCorps Member will help prepare and conduct conservation education programs for classroom visits to county parks and other areas, create educational displays, assist with writing informational articles and press releases. The Member will also assist with public presentations, volunteer coordination and associated activities. The Member will also participate in the planned Eastern Iowa Conservation Alliance monthly workdays, quarterly meetings, Life After AmeriCorps, a national day of service event, and Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service Conference. Other training opportunities may include, but not be limited to CPR/first aid, the IACCBE Winterfest, IAN Workshops, and others. The Member will also be allowed to respond to local, state and national disasters as assigned or requested by the EICA Director.

This position requires sharing weekend and evening program duties as well as general cleaning of interpretive center building with other staff members. This position may start as early as September 1, 2008 depending on applicant's availability. The position will end in August 2009.

Equipment/Job Location:

The Member will be assigned to work from the Hurstville Interpretive Center, Maquoketa. This position requires the member to operate a variety of program presentation equipment including LCD projector, lap top computer, digital camera, etc. Outdoor recreation equipment such as canoe, compass, archery, fishing rod and reel and similar equipment may also be used. Other equipment used will be water sampling kits and hand tools such as saw, hammer, loppers, pruning shears, rake, shovel and other landscape maintenance equipment. This position requires the member to travel throughout all areas of Jackson County. The member must have own transportation and will be reimbursed for official mileage. The employee will have use of a county vehicle when it is available.

Essential Functions of the Job:

- A full time member will be required to complete at least 1700 hours of service as stated in the contract.
- The member will satisfactorily complete appropriate education/training that relates to the Member's ability to perform service and complete the program activities
- Assist with the development, organization, and presentation of environmental education programs for the general public, civic and conservation groups, youth

Continued on back of page

groups and schools in Jackson County. Emphasis will be given to programs that offer volunteer opportunities for the groups and individuals contacted.

- Write news releases and other correspondence related to program presentation.
- Care and maintenance of materials and equipment used for programs.
- Open and staff Hurstville Interpretive Center on a shared weekend and evening basis with other staff.
- Supervise weekend volunteers
- Assist with general cleaning and maintenance of Interpretive Center and grounds
- Assist with special natural resource management projects such as prairie burns, trail management, habitat inventories, water quality sampling
- Perform other duties as directed by the environmental education coordinator or executive director.

Additional Examples of Services Performed:

- Work irregular hours including evenings and weekends.
- Lead groups through activities such as nature hikes, orienteering, canoeing, spelunking, and fishing in outdoor settings
- Provide information to the public concerning the natural resources field and related topics.
- Contact volunteers by phone or written correspondence, devise schedules for programs, complete follow-up contact with volunteers regarding projects, maintain records of projects completed
- Recognize and solve problems occurring during the performance of duties.
- Prepare a site for program presentation or activity to be conducted.
- This position requires the member to be knowledgeable in the administration of first aid procedures.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Basic knowledge of materials, methods, and techniques used in environmental education.
- Basic knowledge of program presentation, equipment use, maintenance, and minor repairs.
- Ability to self-start and find work projects when not directed to do so.
- Ability to express ideas both verbally and in writing.

Leveraging your service

- Make a list of everything you can think of that you created, enhanced, accomplished or learned.
 - Think about:
 - For whom? How often? With what result? To ensure what? Why? How?
- Think in numbers and time
 - Recruited 150 community volunteers for 2 day event



Leveraging your service

- Make your bullet points
- Use “action verbs” (I can send lists)
 - Evaluated, developed, facilitated, assembled, administered, supervised, coordinated, initiated, minimized, generate, composed, financed, furnished, edited, coached, provided, achieved, organized...
 - Make a big, general list and save in a document or within your very general resume
 - Pick and choose the most important/applicable for a specific resume to the position(s) for which you apply

Leveraging your service

- **General example**
- *AmeriCorps Environmental Educator, Eastern IA Conservation Alliance: Linn County Conservation (2007-2009)*
- Served over 3,400 hours as an AmeriCorps member at Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center.
- Created, marketed and presented over 35 unique education programs designed for pre-school children, scouts and the general public including Science for Squirts and the Naturalist Guided Hikes series. Many are now permanent additions to Wickiup Hill's program guide.
- Presented numerous curriculum based environmental and historical programming to thousands of students and general public on and off site. Also responsible for scheduling program inquiries.
- Assisted staff with composition of grant narratives including a significant contribution to the narrative which secured three years of competitive funding for the Conservation Alliance at the Federal level.
- Created a strategic on-line presence for Wickiup Hill on social media sites and trained staff to maintain.
- Daily care and rehabilitation of over 15 captive reptiles and amphibians.
- Contributing author and editor of quarterly newsletter, press releases and website updates.
- Responsible for managing and updating database of newsletter subscribers with custom-designed software.
- Created new exhibit designs and signage including the interactive microscope.
- Recruitment, training and supervision of 10 dedicated volunteers.

Leveraging your service

- Also consider the training you received...
 - CPR / AED / First Aid (current?)
 - Disaster preparedness
 - Diversity & cross-cultural communication
 - Leadership
 - Citizenship / civic engagement
 - Conflict resolution / team-building
 - Grant writing
 - Program specific (prescribed burn, etc.)
- Again, pick and choose most relevant for your tailored resume

Leveraging your service

- Consider honors you may have received
 - Governor's Volunteer Award
 - Certificate of recognition
 - Spirit of Service leadership award
 - Program specific awards / honors

Leveraging your service

- Written or spoken narrative
 - For interviews, letters of intent...
 - Identify among them: your biggest achievement, most meaningful, most challenging (assign them all)
 - In 500 words or less, describe each bullet point and why you assigned it as such
 - Monthly great stories...take copies!
 - For interviews, write it all down and then edit to 2-3 minutes of speech. Practice.

Leveraging your service

Sarah Hinzman's 'Defining Moment in Life'

University of Missouri - Kansas City M.F.A. Admission

In my hometown, 2008 has not exactly been a banner year. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, my birthplace and where I currently reside, the collective community watched agape as the granddaddy of all floods crept into a thousand homes and business, soaked all of it to the core, and then gently receded back to its shallow banks. The opportunity to survive a natural disaster has strengthened my character. Allow me to narrate in the space of one page...

I evacuated my Grandfather from his home. My Aunt's house was halfway submerged. A family business I've worked with since high school was completely submerged. The Iowa Theatre Building—practically my second home—succumbed to water rising from the basement. No one was unaffected. It was surreal and terrifying and epic. When the river put itself back, the community pulled itself together. For the first time in recent memory, people were competing to volunteer with recovery. This was a bit gratifying for me, an AmeriCorps volunteer who had often operated alone. People were finally so forthcoming, so selfless. It was refreshingly un-cynical.

Among my volunteer efforts, I was most at ease when I could help with the animals. The local Animal Shelter had literally floated downriver and now had set up camp with their critters and all of the thousands of flood victims' critters in the horse barns of the community college. A thousand dogs and cats had to be fed, watered, and cleaned up after twice a day (which presents a logistical challenge, among other things). I'll never forget the last day the temporary site was open. The afternoon food and water shuffle was winding down and most of the dogs had been claimed. I'd just given an old Cocker Spaniel a walk—Cinnamon—whose fur was that very color. I was now sweeping near his stall as an elderly gentleman came to claim him. When Cinnamon's stall door opened, he jumped right up on his owner—like an embrace—and they greeted each other affectionately. The owner was so overwhelmingly happy in this moment, and so was the dog. It played out like a *Homeward Bound* moment, and sucker that I am, I wept. I was filled with great emotion that these two were going somewhere together, maybe not *home* home, but wherever it was, it'd be easier to abide with a true friend.

This was definitive for me in that, for the first time in all my volunteer work—or paid work for that matter—I could actually see that my effort to the collective really did make a difference to somebody. Who doesn't wonder if all their effort actually matters? I found out, through the flood, that yes, it actually does. It was a welcome invitation to carry on, to persevere. A person's good effort is never wasted and is always welcome. This, I believe, is worth remembering for all life's moments of great disaster or great renewal.

Staying Engaged



- <http://www.americorpsalums.org/>
- Find your local chapter and get connected with awesome alums!
 - Iowa: Quad Cities
 - Chad Driscoll: cdriscoll@bbbs-mv.org
 - Iowa: Des Moines (new!)
 - Melissa Simmermaker: melissa.simmermaker@iowa.gov
 - Iowa AmeriCorps Alumni Facebook Group
 - www.volunteeriowa.org, VI Facebook page & Twitter
 - Iowa: Cedar Rapids (planned)
 - Angela Sarrels: asarrels@cns.gov

Staying Engaged



- <http://www.americorpsalums.org/>
- You should take advantage of (more info under “For Alums” tab:
 - Career center
 - Free tax returns
 - Bank of America free checking
- You should also:
 - Contact your elected officials and encourage them to support AmeriCorps and eliminate the federal tax on the education award.

AMERICORPS ALUMS

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The 2010 Eli Segal Award - Call for Nominations

Staying Engaged

The AmeriCorps Pledge

***I will get things done for America -
to make our people safer,
smarter, and healthier.***

***I will bring Americans together
to strengthen our communities.***

***Faced with apathy,
I will take action.***

***Faced with conflict,
I will seek common ground.***

***Faced with adversity,
I will persevere.***

***I will carry this commitment
with me this year and beyond.***

***I am an AmeriCorps member,
and I will get things done.***

Continue to volunteer!

For Iowa opportunities:

<https://volunteer.truist.com/icovs/volunteer/>

Elsewhere: connect with your local
United Way

Schools: lunch time, after school
tutors (child & adult)

Parks: environmental programs,
monitoring

Food pantries

Museums: docents, reception,
cataloging

Events: music fests, races, film fests,
holiday fests

Churches/Salvation Army

Disaster response/Red Cross

Re(Sources)

- 1. Hartzell, Dr. Nedra Klee. *Next Steps: Life After AmeriCorps*. Corporation for National Service. Washington, D.C.: 1997.
http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/files/legacy/filemanager/download/Next_Steps/NextSteps.pdf
- 2. ETR Associates. “Segal AmeriCorps Education Award Tutorial.” 2010.
<http://encorps.nationalserviceresources.org/edaward/index.shtml>